

"Should be read by every college and seminary student in the country."—
Words of a prominent minister, formerly a theological professor, of this
booklet.

My Field of Labor—Where Does God Call Me?

BY REV. JOHN D. NUTTING.

"A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him
from heaven."—*John 3:27.*

"And no one taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is
called of God, as was Aaron."—*Heb. 5:4.*

"Then Jehovah came and called, as at other times, Samuel,
Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth."
—*I Sam. 3:10.*

"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I
send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I, send
me. And he said, Go."—*Isa. 6:8, 9.*

Every consistent child of God listens for the voice
of God to himself. Not fanatically, or merely emotion-
ally, but rationally and Biblically, he believes that since
his life is a plan of God his heavenly Father will make
His will known to one who stands waiting to know
and do it. He may need the interpretation of some
more experienced Christian, as did Samuel. But the
message will surely be given. It may call from the
plough to the pulpit, or from unwarranted and self-
centred dreams about the pulpit back to the plough or
ditch. Or his pulpit may be located in the store or
shop or house, by the plough or in the ditch—for every
Christian is called to be a preacher of the Cross, what-
ever his other work may be. The first thing is to be
holy, humble and listening. Then God can speak; and
when He is ready the call to definite work will surely
come to every soul.

The writer well recalls how at his first recognition
to preach a good father in Israel emphasized the view
that when God calls one to preach He does it for
life. There is great truth in the idea; but far more
in the converse, that He also calls many to specific,
limited times of Christian work to meet specific needs
while their usual employment may be secular. The
Kingdom has missed much because this has not been
duly recognized. It is time to emphasize the duty of
lay workers. The work of the Mormon young men
in spreading that evil system is a great object-lesson
of what Christian men from all walks of life might
do in spreading the Kingdom of Christ, if they only

recognized the possibilities. Every Mormon boy is trained to expect to be sent "on a mission" for two years to spread Mormonism, when he gets old enough. The result is that about one Mormon in every 175 is constantly out in the field propagating the evil; almost every nook and corner of civilized lands has felt their influence and had their deceptive literature, thousands of converts are made every year, and Mormonism has



MORMON HEADQUARTERS IN CHICAGO.
Center of work in surrounding States, with scores of men; formerly a Christian church; bought for about \$19,000, about 1905.

far more than doubled its numbers in two decades! One may well ask, If they can do this for a wicked system and without the sustaining grace of God or power of Christian motive and truth, what could we not do with all these, if we only grasped the idea and put it in practice? Seemingly there would not be an unevangelized spot on earth in ten years, nor a civilized community without its own stated worship. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" would seem to mean just this—words spoken not to a select few called "the ministry," but to every soul of man, with intensity of meaning in proportion to his ability and opportunity to serve. And even "minister" means "servant," and a servant, again, is one who is subject to the *call* of his master, and whose business is to do the will of another; not his own.

Every child of God, then, may be sure of a call to

some kind of service, which he will know if he listens carefully and wisely. His is not to choose his own work, but only to listen for and then follow the divine call. It may be long in coming; it may not be very clear at first; friends may say it is a mistake, and that there is no need of such sacrificial work when there are easier fields waiting; it may be a despised work, with rewards of being ignored or even of almost a crucifixion instead of applause and ease; but the child of God who is really listening will surely hear the voice and know it—if his very heart says to God, "Here am I, *send me!*" And if he does not say that, he is not worthy to be called by the name of Christ, the cross-bearer, at all! The Master faced the Cross of all the ages steadily and consciously for years, and never flinched or swerved an hair's breadth, but went straight onward to its climax of scourge, nails, blood, death in agony—and also of *resurrection*; the latter impossible without the former, as much to us as to him, though in different ways. The pathway to spiritual success is always marked by bleeding feet. Many a life, and many a pastorate, is disgracefully barren because it has no blood-marks—it has shunned them. Instead of these it has cast-off garlands of selfish pleasure—marks of treason instead of honor. Everything good *costs*; seeking first the kingdom of *self* never brought any person or people even within sight of the Kingdom. Spiritual accomplishment is always sacrificial; it comes into being in just about the proportion in which one's very life is cast upon the altar of sacrifice, without even thought of ease or self, but only of how best to serve God and obey the divine Call. If this takes one to darkest Africa, to vilest slums, or alone to face a jeering or icy world while with bleeding feet he pioneers some new path for Him, *no matter!* He will give the strength, if so be one follows hand in hand with Him! The sublimest spectacles of history have not been those of blazoned conquerors leading marching hosts, but rather the real heroes such as these, in many an obscure path of service, "of whom the world was not worthy;" in whose footsteps we should esteem it an honor to follow because they were first made by one wearing a Crown of Thorns. Can any sacrifice be too great for Him? Himself said,

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would

save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."—*Matt. 16:24-5; also Mark and Luke; five times stated.*

But the most consecrated man may be in great doubt as to what his particular call of God is, both as to his line of service and its particular field. Sometimes he may seem as one in a dark, tangled wilderness, from which there is no path and through whose densities even the voice of God fails to penetrate to him. Sometimes he may seem to be in the center of open paths radiating in every direction, the trouble being to know which one of the many God calls him to take. How can he tell? Which is the voice of God, and which that of man, or of Satan to mislead and wreck his life; or in the dark tangle has God forsaken him entirely?

If he is truly God's seeking child, the latter cannot by any possibility be true. In reality both are testing-times of faith, to lead to deeper study and trust, out of which God will lead him all the stronger and more certainly in due time, if the right course be taken.

Speaking from a somewhat intense experience of several decades, both in his own affairs and those of many others, the writer would say that there are just two generic things to be done, as follows:

1. "*Be instant in prayer.*" If a child wishes to know his father's will, or even to hear his voice, the most natural thing in the world is to talk to him—to ask him for what he wishes. If the father be close by, this will be easy; if further away, the obstacles intervening must be overcome by louder calling or personal approach. If the child neglects or refuses to speak, he need not expect any answer, unless in upbraiding command. So the Christian must pray, as the natural means of inquiry from his heavenly Father; and if He seem at a distance he must clear away that one thing which can really separate him from God, which is some cherished sin, of commission or omission. Then alone can he be in tune to catch the still small voice of God when it comes. A soul out of harmony is a soul without a message, always, left to its own devices and sure to make a failure or worse. There must be careful self-examination; not morbid, but genuine. All selfishness must be cut out; every thought of making a "big success" in the eye of any one but God; of salary beyond real necessities as God sees them; of ease; of literary opportunity beyond like

necessity as a means to the service required; of health beyond like needs; of friends, congeniality, and a score of other possible selfish considerations which have often unconsciously stopped the ears of good men from hearing the call of God—all these must be cast aside, or kept strictly subordinate, if we are to hear the call when it comes. One must be ready to respond to the call, whatever it may be, without reserve; otherwise he is holding back part of the price, and God can not speak to such an one as to a faithful child. The child who with stubborn unwillingness should ask his father's will would really not ask at all. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." The blood-drops of sacrifice must mark the very threshold of prayer as well as the pathway of acceptable service—indeed, the pathway begins at that threshold or not at all.

Any one who is closely acquainted with men, even in Seminaries and Bible schools, knows that this spirit needs constantly to be emphasized, and knows also how sadly true it is that some men seem to be looking for anything but a place of *sacrificial* service. A superintendent of church missionary work for many years in a very large field once told the writer this story: "In a certain Seminary I talked with a young man about to graduate. I laid before him at length the great need of the cause of Christ here for men, and how His work was suffering. After we had talked for quite a while he replied: "Well, Dr. ——, I expect to be married before long, to a lady who has been accustomed to draw and paint a good deal, and I must have a field suited to her artistic tastes"—and that was the end of the matter! More than one man has advanced views hardly less painful, to the writer—showing that his personal desires, instead of God's will, were the deciding factor; viewing the ministry as a profession to be chosen instead of a calling from God to be followed, even with bleeding feet! How can God's call reach one who thus bars it out by a selfish test; or of what use would it be if it did? In what sense can such an one be said to be really a servant of God at all, unless these choices are unconsciously so dominated? Is it not of such material that unworthy men in the ministry are always made? Is not absolute surrender of self the very first condition of even disciple-

ship, not to speak of the sacred work of the ministry? And if such motives were eliminated, would the neediest fields so often go begging while the easier ones have plenty of applicants? Is not this really the sore spot in the whole matter of ministerial supply? Suppose every young man and woman in all our colleges and seminaries today should resolve, "By the grace of God I am going to the neediest field I can find and fill, unless providentially prevented or called elsewhere;" would not all fields soon be filled, and the work of the Kingdom receive an impetus such as it has never before known? Such is the spirit which is at once the cause and result of true prayer. It does not say, "Here am I, send me if you have a nice, easy place for me and my wife, with a good salary," but "Here am I, Lord, *send me ANYWHERE* and to do *ANYTHING* that Thou dost wish; only that Thou dost go too!"

But prayer is not all. God usually works by means; and the writer's experience with men has been that those who relied upon mere "impressions" received in prayer, without other grounds, were least dependable; because some other influence would soon lead them to feel differently. God does not reveal himself contradictorily. He has given us the facts which should shape our action, which we may suppose also shape his choice for us; and with them also a judgment to find them out and reason about them. Prayer should be chiefly for help in doing these things; not for direct impressions of duty without this process. Hence the second necessity is this:

2. Be prayerfully earnest in studying and weighing the facts of the case.

First, one needs to rightly estimate his own abilities and weaknesses—what he can naturally count on and what he must guard especially against. God never sets a pigmy to lift a mountain, unless He wishes to work a miracle; he usually adapts means to ends, and we must plan on this basis. As a merchant must "take stock" before beginning a year's business, so must the Christian before deciding his future work. This is a difficult process; the more so because life choices must usually be made before one has demonstrated very much, even to himself, what gifts God has given him. Conceit does not imply power, nor does undue modesty necessarily imply weakness. The estimate of

wise friends may be helpful; also past experience in different lines. Indeed, after much experience with men the writer has about reached the conclusion, that this method of actual testing oneself in the work contemplated, under the best possible supervision, is the only really reliable criterion. Sometimes it is possible to make such trial of work without actual, final commitment to it. Such earnest effort will be likely to reveal both powers and deficiencies as nothing else can; and if continued long enough will also show some what about the prospect of remedying the latter. Such experiment would have prevented many a mismatching of man and work, both in and out of the ministry. Pastors should watch for souls for the Master's work, giving them such tasks as may be feasible for both testing and development. Here again we may learn from the Mormon proselyting system. Probably no religious organization can show a greater proportion of laymen who can speak in public and do religious work after its fashion, however poor or wicked that may be. And this is simply because every boy or man is *brought up to take his part*, and to consider himself at least a cog in the religious machine which is to conquer the world. Beginning in the monthly, fast-day "testimony" sessions of his primary S. S. class, by telling that he "has a testimony (revelation from God) that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God," going on through "ordination" as a "deacon" at 12 years and "elder" at perhaps 17, he is then liable to be called on at any service to take the stand and "speak," and to be sent out "on a mission" without salary, to propagate his system against the world. All his Sunday-school and other training has such work in view, whatever his daily occupation may be. But among us what do we find? Perhaps hardly one in twenty of our Christian boys is brought up to think of himself as either now or in future having any part in public Christian work; that is all for the "minister," and perhaps the deacons, or such. The extent of his experience is that he is urged to some private personal work, or to usher, etc. And our girls are also too little taught to look forward to definite Christian service. Surely all this is a well-nigh fatal mistake, and a tremendous waste of power. Surely every converted soul should have the universal call to work laid upon him, and should be trained

sufficiently for ordinary kinds of service. And especially should young people in high-school and college be urged and trained thus. Why should they not feel that their life work is to be decided by God's call instead of by caprice or money, in secular almost as much as in sacred service; that whatever they do they are to "seek *first* the Kingdom of God" in it; and that every Christian young person of ability should consider carefully whether God does not call him to at least a period of distinctively religious work? It seems to the writer that this last should be especially true of young men in college.

The study of the various fields of labor is also important; town or country, home or foreign, generically; as well as any particular opening which may come, in the providence of God.

But after all these are done; if no distinctive voice of the Spirit seems clearly imperative to one's own heart, what then? Just persist in the same process; keep on praying, keep on weighing the many calls of fields as to opportunity for doing what is most needed for the souls of men. There are two divisions in this matter of need, also; one the need for the work itself, the other the difficulty in finding men to do it. Of two fields having equal call in themselves, the one most difficult to fill has this added call, to any one who is situated so that he can go.

In all this process the subtlest danger is that some unconscious selfish motive may vitiate the whole.

With the above considerations in mind, which apply equally with reference to all fields, the writer wishes to speak briefly about the field in which he is called to labor; and in which he believes that more men should also hear the call of God.

The facts about the Utah work are briefly these: We face a gigantic and practically pagan system, which is working tremendously to spread itself over the world, and which must be overcome and its victims delivered and converted to Christ. This system controls a region equal in size to three states like Ohio and of vast resources; it has about 525 settlements, of which *over four hundred have no local Christian work at all*; its doctrines constitute practically a sex-paganism, including belief in many gods of flesh and bones, many of whom are in polygamy and whose chief glory is to

propagate (see tracts), denying or falsifying every great truth of the Bible and thus endangering the very foundations of morality, religion and the home wherever accepted. Mormons cannot even be touched in any large measure by ordinary methods of work, but can nearly all be reached by our special ones. Their workers are principally young men, trained as already shown, who go out for two years at their own lookout for expenses; and our bright, consecrated young men can do a great work for them on similar terms; and besides this in the West, there is very much to be done outside of the Utah region.

This work must of necessity be unsectarian and highly specialized. To do it the Utah Gospel Mission was organized at Cleveland, beginning field work in June, 1901. Its methods are closely adapted to the very peculiar work to be done. The men live in great gospel wagons, each the home for three workers, fitted up for reasonable comfort the year round, as the men



INSIDE OF WAGON 3.
Showing stove, cupboard, table, seats (lockers) beds closed, etc.

travel from place to place. They visit every home, spending half an hour or so at each in personal work, explaining the literature to be left and the great Bible truths. Meetings are held as may be feasible, outdoors in summer and wherever possible in winter. The work involves self-denial, but by no means as much as many endure for money, or as Mormon emissaries sometimes undergo in their work; and it is

both very interesting and absolutely necessary if we are to reach this people at all. As they send their men out without salary, we must meet them on their own ground in this or suffer great hindrance (see our tract *Special Difficulties*); hence only necessary expenses are guaranteed, including clothing, R. R. fares and all. But there are many men who could give two or more years on these terms with even very great advantage to themselves, besides doing the work which is so urgently needed; while many more could give one year each.

Some of the reasons for undertaking this work are these:

First. An almost unequalled chance to preach the gospel to a great and strategic mass of otherwise unreached people, whose propagandist activity makes



ONE OF THE DESTITUTE VILLAGES

About 350 people, all Mormons, settled over 50 years; no local Christian work.

them perhaps ten times as important as their numbers would otherwise be; and they number about 350,000 now. Of all these thousands of people, probably not more than one in fifty is ever seen in a Christian service, aside from our meetings; and practically the only chance of the others for direct Christian teaching is from our work, since they will not attend church services even where they might. A faithful man with us can visit from 2,000 to 3,000 homes in a year, containing from 12,000 to 18,000 people; and the meetings held will reach about the same number again.

2. *Fulfilling the last command of Christ as regards*



THE CHILDREN IN THE VILLAGE OPPOSITE.
 All Mormons, trained in their awful doctrines and no chance to learn better except through our work. Unusually bright group.

these people, which cannot be practically done by any other known method, while the command applies to them as much as to any other people.



WAGONS AND WORKERS CAMPED
While working at Weston, Idaho, July, 1906.

These two points can hardly be emphasized too much. Those which follow are more of a personal character, but still very important.

3. *This work offers an opportunity to test one's self* in earnest Christian work requiring the gifts of the ministry, before making the decision for life. Probably no work affords a better chance in this line, and we know of none as good. In personal work; preaching; management of business affairs; economy of time, strength and money; mechanical resource; acquaintance with human nature; study of practical apologetics and religious frauds, and practically everything which a pastor needs to be able to do, the opportunity here is great. This is of special importance to college men and others whose life call is not yet clear to them.

4. *Getting in touch with humanity* in its concrete, common-denominator form is of exceedingly great importance to most graduates. Many a man gets so out of touch with ordinary humanity by his long course of book-study that he needs most of all to get back again by the quickest possible route. Many a minister who does not do this spends years of labor in almost useless firing over or under or to one side or the other of his human marks instead of right at their hearts, and so makes a measurable failure of his work without knowing why. Let him come and spend several hours a day for a year or two in dealing with people



WAGONS AND WORKERS, JUNE, 1907

personally about their deepest religious experiences, testing this and that method of approach and argument and persuasion, and he will agree that as a school of human nature in divine things, and of methods, it would be hard to imagine a work more useful. Then let him back this up by some of our stirring meetings, when we must remain for perhaps hours afterwards to settle the fact that we do know a little Bible truth

with some "elders" who think they know all there is while they know almost nothing, and the demonstration will be complete. One cannot bring men to God unless he knows men. Perhaps the greatest failure of the ministry to-day is generally felt to be just here; constantly making the impression of theorists instead of practical men of affairs, spiritual and temporal; too little practical knowledge of men and things. When a medical student graduates from his school, even though he has seen clinical work a good deal, he considers it of highest importance that he get the added hospital or similar practical experience at the earliest possible moment. So it should be with ministers who have not had such experience already. And while the work of the Mission affords almost unrivalled opportunities in this line, the worker is all the time doing more good than he may ever have a chance to do afterwards in an equal time. And if one can have this experience before his seminary studies it will also add much to their practical value.

5. *Getting an intensely practical knowledge of the great truths of Christianity.* Hourly our worker is using these and bringing forth their logical and Biblical bases; he cannot be ignorant of them, and his knowledge must be of the concrete, practical kind. Hourly they are objected to, denied, scoffed at and ridiculed; and the greatest need of people is that these truths be so presented and defended that they will be accepted in place of the terrible Mormon doctrines, and will lead to true conversion and Christian character. The writer knows of no work which even approaches this in such value to the worker. Not one theological graduate in dozens will be as familiar with them as any of our men will be on entering Seminary.

6. It is of exceeding importance that every pastor have a practical knowledge of the representative religious fraud of to-day. Not only will he probably have occasion to meet it in his parish, but such frauds constitute one of the great methods of the Adversary against Christianity, and should receive far more attention than is usually given them. Mormonism is the type of almost all these. It is also a type of all pagan systems, and will give the worker a fine glimpse of how non-Christian peoples look at things and of the effect of paganism; being thus perhaps as useful to one who expects to enter foreign work as to the home laborer.

7. *Incidentally, the work will be helpful through the travel had, knowledge of our country, scenery, lessons in economy of money and time, friendships formed with other workers, and usually in increase of health and stamina by the constant outdoor life.*

8. *The scarcity of men for this work.* Up to date of this writing, (early in 1910) we have seldom had enough workers and only once more than enough. Several times one wagon has stood idle for lack of



TWO WAGONS GOING THROUGH BRIGHAM CANYON, 1901.

men, though the people were in perishing need of its work and must consequently go without any gospel message from without for two or more years, till we could come around again. Men with young children cannot rightly go; and the same is true of those who must provide support for parents or other persons depending upon them. Some are not physically able. Others lack the consecration; others are already pledged to work before they learn of this. Some graduate so late in life that they ought hardly to take the time, though many a mature man would gain time instead of losing by taking a year with us. But there are thousands of other men who are able in every way to take up the work for two years, or at least for one, on the conditions already given. They are found in seminaries, colleges, Bible schools, among providentially foot-loose pastors, and elsewhere. **UPON THESE WHO CAN RIGHTLY GO MUST THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS GREAT WORK REST.**

These last pages are written in the hope that they may be used of God to send the Utah call home to many earnest souls. We are not asking men to give a *lifetime* to this work without support beyond expenses, though some could well give many years; but that *enough men to meet the need* will *lend* themselves to the work for two years each, or even for one. We see no reason why many times the number we can use should not be ready and glad to do this. Instead of looking upon this work as too great a sacrifice, as many have seemed to do, it should be looked upon as a **VERY GREAT CHANCE**, hardly ever equalled, both to preach the gospel to needy masses occupying a strategic position and at the same time to increase one's power for usefulness in the permanent work to which he may be called later. Will not every reader whose work is not already clearly settled for him, make this work a subject of earnest prayer and careful study, and help in it if the way is open?

The qualifications needed are specified in the small print item below. The Mission will be glad to correspond with any one who can approximate these requirements and is free to go, not excluding those hindered by moderate school debts; also to have the names of suitable men suggested. Address

THE UTAH GOSPEL MISSION,

1854 E. 81st St., Cleveland, O.

Cleveland, Feb., 1910

MISSION WORKERS WANTED.

We are often short of workers, and are always glad to learn of suitable men who can go. To succeed, one must have fair health, ability, education and knowledge of Bible truths, joined with devoted love for God and for souls, a conviction of duty in this field, unselfish perseverance, and reasonable adaptability. He should also be able to sing gospel hymns with others, and we need some men who can play these; while if one is used to teams and has mechanical resource so much the better. The best gifts in preaching and personal work will find full play, while lesser ones are not excluded, and the work affords invaluable opportunities for the cultivation and growth of all one's gifts by practical experience, while helping meet one of the greatest gospel needs to be found anywhere. Persons who are fairly qualified as above and who can give at least one year to the work with support to cover only his entire expenses (including R. R.) are invited to write at once to the Utah Gospel Mission, 1854 E. 81st St., Cleveland, giving full particulars and references. The term of service commonly begins late in June, but vacancies are filled at almost any time.

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